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They Shall Be All Taught of God.

Note: A Baccalaureate Sermon of President Wilson's printed by the Alumni Association in 1923 brought many expressions of appreciation from grateful alumni and friends. Now the Association is further indebted to our president for permission to prirt and circulate this message delivered to the Class of 1925, in Voorhees Chapel on Sunday, May 31. It is sent out with the assurance that it will be gratefully received and in the hope that it may deepen the interest of alumni and friends in the religious education program of the College.

Text: John vi: 45. *"It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God."*

Dr. Anderson's Inaugural Vision. It was more than a century ago that Dr. Isaac Anderson became president of Maryville College, or "The Southern and Western Theological Seminary," as it was then called. For his inaugural discourse he selected two texts. The first text, from Hosea iv: 6, tells of religious ignorance and the calamity that it entails. God declares, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me." The second text, from Malachi ii: 7, tells of the duty and the responsibility of priestly religious education when thus confronted by popular religious ignorance. It declares, "For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts." As the theme of his inaugural address, Dr. Anderson deduced from these texts taken from the prophetic writings this proposition, or, as he called it, this "doctrine": "The great head of the church requires knowledge as an indispensable qualification in the gospel ministry." And then he developed his theme, first, by showing historically that it has "always been God's method to instruct his people by a studious and learned ministry ever since he gave a written word"; and, secondly, by taking what, it is pleasant to note, was for the time in which it was written, a very creditable and scholarly "view of the knowledge necessary to the gospel ministry." So very complete was his discussion of these lines of thought that it amounted to a conclusive demonstration of the correctness of the positions that he had taken. The more one examines the writings and the life of our Dr. Anderson, the more profound is the respect that he feels for the ability, the versatility, the integrity, and the enlightened religious and philanthropic leadership of that humble-minded but princely man of God.

Dr. Anderson's Contribution to Religious Education. Isaac Anderson was a man of visions, broad, far-reaching, and inspiring visions; but he was not visionary. He saw most convincingly the overwhelming need of the provision of religious education for the leaders of the church, as he said in his inaugural, "of this western country"; and he spent his mighty life in

heroic endeavors to provide that desperately-needed religious education. He said: "We will go forward, although like Abraham, we know not the way; yet he who guided the Patriarch will guide us in the right way." And he added: "The people whose patronage has been solicited, have given evidence of generous hearts and sound judgments by their prompt and liberal subscriptions. They have enabled you to prepare a neat and commodious building. You have also about three hundred volumes for the commencement of a library." The building referred to was the partly constructed "female seminary," a two-story brick building, containing six rooms, that was purchased for six hundred dollars and then completed by the directors of the theological seminary. It stood on the eastern corner of the town lot on which New Providence Presbyterian Church now stands. On such modest foundations as these, Isaac Anderson, at the age of thirty-nine years, began on a larger scale the work of Christian education which at the age of twenty-two years, seventeen years earlier, he had begun by the establishment of Union Academy. And before he passed to his heavenly reward at the age of seventy-seven years, he had experienced the solid satisfaction of knowing that he had trained about two hundred young men for the Christian ministry.

The Vision for Today. One hundred and six years have passed by since Dr. Anderson wrote out and presented to the Synod of Tennessee the constitution of the Southern and Western Theological Seminary. Watchman! what of the day? Watchman! what signs of progress are there? The reply comes promptly, full of encouragement and cheer: "The passing of a hundred years," says the watchman, "has not changed the high ambitions and the Christian spirit of Maryville." And it is true that, as Isaac Anderson stood in 1819, at the beginnings of Maryville, and longed and prayed to be able to contribute largely to the religious education of his generation, just so now, in 1925, the institution that he founded is more interested, if possible, than ever, in affording its constituency opportunities for the very best and most helpful training in religious education, with a view toward making still larger contributions to the needs of humanity and the glory of our Lord and of his church. And, in the spirit of Isaac Anderson of old, the Maryville of today would find its duty and cheer and inspiration in the kindly purpose and will of our God, as unmistakably stated by our Lord himself. As Dr. Anderson found his cheer and the revelation of his duty in the words of Hosea and Malachi, prophets of old, so would the Maryville of today find its encouragement and challenge in the words of our Lord himself as found in the text we announced as we began: "Jesus answered and said unto them: It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God."

Our Inspiring Theme: *Universal Religious Education is the Will of God.* These words of our Lord, fitting as they perfectly do, into the method of his

ministry as the great Teacher, and into the philosophy of grace that he taught mankind, thrill us with a sense of the inexpressible glory of this eternal and sovereign purpose of our God. This is a great, a godlike task—the training of all ages and all peoples. Universal religious education is the declared sovereign policy of our Heavenly Father, even more inevitably than is popular secular education the purpose of our American democracy. "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." That will is, in part, that every one of his created children shall know God and know the truth of God's religion, and be able to teach this divine learning to others. The theme or, as Dr. Anderson's phrase is, the "doctrine" of this text is then: Universal religious education is the declared will of God.

I. The Content of This Religious Education. The chief content of God's religious education of his children has always been the knowledge of God himself and of God's will. In the words of the catechism: "The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God and what duty God requires of man." And God has employed his divine wisdom in implanting these vital truths in the hearts of men.

II. God Uses, in Effecting This Education, a Great Staff of Teachers. God is a Teacher of infinite resources; and all the best of his creation and inspiration he has enlisted in his educational work in our behalf. Teachers animate and teachers inanimate he has brought into his service; teachers personal and impersonal; teachers individual and collective; teachers earthly and not earthly; all these and more he has enlisted and certificated to serve us in bringing to pass our religious education.

There Is the Universal Teacher, Nature. The natural sciences spell out marvelous revelations of God's infinite creative power and wisdom. The trinity of worlds—the optical world, which is seen by our unaided vision; the telescopic world, which is revealed to us by the telescope; and the microscopic world, which is placed within the range of our sight by the lenses of the microscope—all this trinity of worlds testifies with ten thousand eloquent tongues to our Creator's divine being, wisdom, and power. The birds and buds, the blue arch of heaven, the boundary circle of the horizon, the nature pulsating within us, and the nature glowing about us—all these and myriad others of nature's witnesses to Almighty God, both whisper and thunder to our souls their testimony to one and another of the fundamental truths of religious instruction.

And the Infallible Teacher, the Bible. We need more than natural theology to guide our way through the mazes of human existence. And God recognized the imperative need and gave us his glorious revelation of himself and of his saving grace, and of man's nature and needs. This revelation

he made through his book, the Sacred Scriptures, that make us wise unto salvation. The nations of earth are learning the lessons of divine wisdom from this inspired book. Without the Bible, ignorance, vice, and paganism; with it, wisdom, morality, and Christianity. As Frederick W. Robertson says of the word of God: "This book has held spellbound the hearts of nations in a way in which no other single book has ever held men before. States have been founded on its principles. Men hold the Bible in their hands when they prepare to give solemn evidence affecting life, death, or property; its prayers and its psalms are the language which we use when we speak to God; eighteen centuries have found no holier, no diviner language; we feel the Bible to be, not a collection of books, but the Book." This book of God's is a mightier teacher than are all the books of man's production. From it men have learned the lessons of eternal life.

Human Biography a Teacher. From the lives of the renowned men and women who appear in the Bible and throughout the ages of history, we learn the incarnated truths that could be but partially and imperfectly learned by any other method. Patriarchs, kings, prophets, apostles, and martyrs have taught the world how to live and how to die. Religion has become irresistible when thus clothed in the human experience of those whose worthy lives we respect and reverence and are constrained to imitate.

Human History a Teacher. The history of the Christian religion is, from the standpoint of years, as yet but comparatively a brief one, but it is marvelously illuminating in portraying before us the divinely worked out elements of religious education. The hand of God in human history can be seen writing his decrees on every page. Human experiences reveal the overruling and controlling ascendency of God in the lives of men. The Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles are Sacred History, and God walks throughout these historic books; but so does he walk in what, by a sad misnomer, we term "Profane" or "Secular" History. The fact is that we see even therein on every page the divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will.

Our Lord Himself Our Greatest Teacher. In nature, where he is the Supreme Creator; in the Bible, where his red cord of sacrifice and dying love runs all the way from Genesis to the Revelation; in human biography, where he is an understanding and sympathetic member of our family; in human history, where he sits within the shadow, keeping watch above his own; here and wherever he appears, our Lord is the greatest teacher there is in his great universe. Four simple gospels depict him as never elsewhere has any other one been depicted; the Sermon on the Mount, with its Golden Rule and Lord's Prayer, reveals his unquestionable divinity; while the parables and miracles manifest his supreme leadership in religion. He taught others,

he has taught us; he will forever be the Supreme Teacher of the children of men.

The Triune Teacher. Our Savior came as a messenger from the Father and taught us what the Father had commissioned him to speak. "As my Father hath taught me, I speak these things." "All things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." And he said of the Holy Spirit: "The Comforter, who is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." And Paul says, "Ye yourselves are taught of God." Thus does the Triune Teacher, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, fulfill the pledge of our text, "They shall be all taught of God."

Christian Parents Are Teachers. In the old dispensation it was required of parents that they should train their children in the true religion; for wise is Solomon's proverb: "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it." And in the new dispensation the command is: "Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." The Hebrew law was: "Teach them thy sons and thy sons' sons." Isaiah, the prophet, cried: "The father to the children shall make known the truth." Joel said: "Tell ye your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation." And the psalmist sang: "The things which we have heard and known and our fathers have told us, we will not hide from their children, telling to the generation to come the praises of Jehovah and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done." Parents are ordained of God as the teachers of the family; and millions of us owe most of what is worthy in us to the tutelage of our parents, who taught us the ways of life.

Our Lord's Church Is a Teacher. The grandest mission ever committed to human agency was that which our Lord entrusted to his disciples in the Great Commission: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations—teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Of the apostolic church it was recorded: "Daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ." Of Paul, such things as this were said: that he dwelt two years in Rome, under arrest, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ. The church is the inveterate foe of ignorance. The pulpit of evangelical Protestantism has been an efficacious means of universal education.

The Schools of the Church Are Teachers. There have been organized as ancillary and auxiliary to the church such agencies of religious education as the Sabbath or Bible schools, the recently formed Vacation Bible schools,

and the school annexes in which supplementary Biblical and religious instruction is provided for the public schools. The work accomplished by such agencies in the past is beyond the estimate of earthly mathematics; only the heavenly mind can measure it. Men have sneered at the Sabbath school; but civilization, religion, law and order, and human happiness and welfare owe more to this much spoken-against organization than to the cavilling critics, were those critics multiplied a thousand times in number. And the outlook is hopeful that the Vacation Bible schools and the Annex schools and the like will contribute a notable service to the church and to the state and to the general interests of humanity.

And Notably Are the Colleges of the Church Teachers. It is especially gratifying and fitting that the colleges of the church of Christ should be making a notable contribution to the cause of religious education. The careful student of the signs of the times cannot but note as a significant indication of progress that there has been an almost inconceivable advance in the amount and character of the study of religion, of the Bible, of philanthropy, and of related subjects during recent decades. A century ago there was almost certainly not so much of such studies in the colleges of the entire United States as there is in some cases now within the limits of a single State. True, some of this study is not all that it should be in spirit and method; but much of it is excellent and much, we must believe, is superlatively good in its influence on the lives and constituencies that it affects. The increase in the provision of such courses of religious education has been advancing by leaps and bounds. It has come to pass that even institutions historically little concerned in such matters have felt constrained by public sentiment and the calls of their constituencies to provide courses in religious education, both as cultural and as vocational courses. And the work thus provided as a rule is as scholarly as any, and commands as much respect as do the other departments of instruction. This augurs well for the future of religion and civilization.

III. God Has Used Our Own Alma Mater as a Teacher. As we have seen, the original reason for being, on the part of Maryville College, was that it should contribute to a serious need of what was then called "the great Southwest,"—the need of religious education. The Southern and Western Theological Seminary had but one object, and that was to remove religious ignorance and to promote religious education. And it was markedly successful in realizing its great and generous purpose. To a degree that could hardly have been expected in view of the limited financial resources of the school, it succeeded, during the forty-two ante-bellum years, in training a large number of men for the gospel ministry. As already stated, there were about two hundred of these "sons of the prophets."

Post-Bellum Religious Education at Maryville. When Professor Lamar and his colleagues, President and Professor Bartlett, revived the College after a sleep that threatened to be a sleep of death, they re-established it with the very same general purposes that Dr. Anderson had proposed at the genesis of the institution. They refounded it with the purpose of imparting religious instruction and of training men and women to be leaders in the different forms of religious education. And they had the happiness of seeing most of their graduates engage in some form of religious or philanthropic service.

The Bible in the College. In 1888-1889 the first required curriculum Bible study in the post-bellum College was conducted by the speaker; and from that time to the present all students have taken whatever amount of Bible study has been required. The great influence of the introduction of this Bible study in deepening and quickening the February Meetings and the general religious spirit of the College was widely remarked upon; while, on the other hand, the February Meetings contributed much interest and earnestness to the Bible courses. The reciprocal influence of Bible study and the February Meetings was very great and very helpful.

The Bible Training Department. From 1891 to 1907, or for sixteen years, a common hour was set aside every week during which time all the professors and teachers conducted classes in the English Bible. In 1907, as the result partly of a contribution for current funds made by Mr. John C. Martin, of New York City, a Bible Training department was established, with two professors in charge: Rev. Clinton Hancock Gillingham, Old Testament; and Rev. Hubert Samuel Lyle, New Testament. In 1909, two years later, Mr. Martin contributed $20,000 and the Directors set aside another $20,000, making $40,000 in all, as a partial endowment for this department.

An Expanding Department. From the beginning, the Bible Training department has been both scholarly and reverent, and has commanded the respect of both faculty and students. Of late years there have been developing in connection with the department a number of those courses of study that belong especially to what has come to be known of late as a Religious Education department. They have to do with the Principles and Practice of Religious Address and of Religious Education, and include a History of Religious Education. Three professors have been conducting this department of Bible Training and what has been virtually a department of Religious Education. So efficient has the work been in these allied departments that the attention of college people in different parts of our country has been called to Maryville in this regard. Several institutions, after investigation, have adopted the general plan of our Bible Training department. And now this same reputation of Maryville's good work in this department has been

the occasion, under Providence, of a generous and cheering offer of help towards the substantial enlargement of the department.

The Recent Generous Pledge Toward a Religious Education Department. An earnest friend of the church and of Christian education, in furtherance of his deep desire to help forward the cause of Christ, not long since conceived the idea of making a substantial contribution toward the establishment or enlargement of departments of Religious Education in certain sections where such departments would in all probability prove successful and especially useful. So he decided that he would contribute the sum of fifty thousand dollars to each of three colleges which were thoroughly committed to the policy of providing training in the Bible and in the various forms of religious activities; and that he would do this on the condition that the said institutions should secure for the department a total endowment, including his gift, of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars. After looking the field over, he chose as beneficiaries to receive his offer, the following institutions: In the West, Parsons College, of Fairfield, Iowa; In the Southwest, Trinity University, of Waxahachie, Texas; and in the central South, our own Maryville College. Maryville was the first institution decided upon. Since Maryville already has a Bible Training endowment of forty-two thousand dollars, it will have to raise an additional fifty-eight thousand dollars in order to secure the fifty thousand dollars of the conditional pledge. Where this large sum is to come from, only God knows: but he knows, and we trust to his gracious providence to provide it. The realization of this large addition to Maryville's resources will strengthen it in one of the two or three points where additional facilities are especially needed. And thus will Maryville College approximate somewhat more closely its eager desire to be even yet more useful to the needy world.

IV. The Outlook for Religious Education Is Optimistic. The Christian world has been sorely tried in the experiences of the past few years. It would seem that darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people. But God still has his inflexible purposes. As our Lord said in my text: "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God." The light of religious learning will ultimately dissipate the lowering clouds of darkness. We have good ground for enthusiasm and optimism in the present-day outlook and opportunities of religious education. Optimism belongs to the children of the day. The prophets tell of reinforcements of knowledge and wisdom for which God has provided. "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." And the day of promise will come when "they shall teach no more every man his neighbor and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me," says God, "from the least of them unto the greatest of them." And there are unmistakable signs that God is enlisting more teachers than ever before in the task

of bringing to pass the saying, "They shall be all taught of God"; and, if so, there will be more religious education than ever, and so much the greater will be the resultant divine learning and wisdom that men shall enjoy. And since God's truths are the mightiest of transforming truths, the new heavens and the new earth that are promised will be realized the sooner.

V. The Class of 1925 and the Cause of Religious Education. Members of the Class of 1925: This Baccalaureate Sabbath of yours has room in it for big thoughts and for great purposes.

Thoughts of Gratitude to the Home Folks. You have thoughts today of gratitude to the home folks for what they have done to make it possible for you to belong to the happy aristocracy of college graduates. Other valuable possessions may be lost, but the culture and enlarged ability and exalted ideals that are yours as the result of the work of the past college years are permanent acquisitions, non-forfeitable, and, as the lawyers say, they inhere in you in perpetuity. And your parents or other kindred or friends have helped make it possible for you to attain this to-be-envied vantage-ground that you have now reached. The home folks have been teachers themselves and have made possible many other teachers, and so have had much to do with giving you the education that is now your abiding riches.

Thoughts of Gratitude to the Old College. You have thoughts today also of gratitude to the old College for what it has done to make possible your acquisition of that cherished college education. For four years the College has been a little cosmos to you, and you have found here the special departments of study and the general interests of life that have especially appealed to your respective personalities. The classrooms with their training in philosophy, the languages, arts, and sciences; your own rooms that have been your home while you have been in College; the chapel with its assembly-room uses of so large a variety; the departments of music, expression, and art allowing special development along those lines; the library, especially of late, in its new and delightful quarters; the campus with its worthy buildings, its athletic fields, its forests evergreen and deciduous, and its caroling birds of autumn, winter, and spring; its gymnasiums and thrilling athletic contests; its forensics and its literary societies; its Christian organizations and fellowship, its Vespers, and its incomparable Thursday morning addresses, and its immortal February Meetings; the social life of the College and its happy friendships; the broad Americanism of the hill where the South, the North, the East, and the West meet in delightful brotherhood; the kindliness and geniality of the people of Maryville and their manifest friendly relationship with student life, so different from the friction between "town" and "gown" that exists in many college towns—many of these and other college memories come to you on this last college Sabbath day and arouse in

you a sense of real gratitude to Alma Mater and to Alma Mater's friendly environment. Blessings brighten as they take their flight—even college blessings; and common experience shows that appreciation of them will be still further augmented by distance of place and time.

The Best Way to Demonstrate Your Gratitude. Thus you are thinking gratefully of the parents at the old home, and of the old college mother on the hill. Well, in no way, it seems to me, can you demonstrate your gratitude more unequivocally, or delight loving paternal and maternal hearts more completely than by conforming heartily to what we have seen is God's desire to teach us heavenly wisdom; that is, first, by getting heavenly wisdom for ourselves; and, then, secondly, by imparting that wisdom to others, as it is evident God would have us do.

First, Get Yet More Wisdom. Dr. Crothers, in counseling recent converts, uttered this very wise slogan to serve as their battle-cry: "Keep on keeping on." So in your Christian life, get more wisdom; keep on keeping on in the pursuit of heavenly knowledge. "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting, get understanding," and get still more of it. There is no limit to the amount of divine wisdom that is available. "In Christ," said the Apostle Paul, "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Yours has been the happiest of fortunes thus far—the entering into wisdom's ways and the laying up in store of the teachings she has freely bestowed upon you through many teachers. Throughout life, add to your virtue, knowledge. The confines of the religious knowledge or education that is available to us are like the horizon or the rainbow; they always recede as we push forward toward them. There are yet many more worlds to conquer.

Secondly, Impart Knowledge to Others. Demonstrate your gratitude to your Great Teacher by imparting knowledge to others, and thus help forward the realization of God's cherished program of religious education for all. The majority of you are planning to be teachers. And while you are teachers of earthly knowledge, you can also be at the same time teachers of the divine wisdom that God wishes the world to have. Our Lord built the future of his kingdom on the twelve disciples—teachers he trained; and then on the seventy teachers he sent forth; and then on the one hundred and twenty disciples in the upper chamber prayer-meeting; and then on the five hundred who saw his theophany on the mount of Galilee. Your training as teachers of the public and private systems of education fits you to a remarkable degree to be also teachers of the moral and religious principles of the Christian faith. Thousands of American teachers are not merely recorded in the faculties of public and private schools, but also in the roster of the Great Teacher himself, as assistants of his, highly-prized of him and of his

church. And hosts of those who have never entered the profession of teaching have, nevertheless, enlisted whole-heartedly in the number of those who are active teachers of all that is worthy and good in ethics and religion.

Be Christian Pedagogues. May all of you, the more than fourscore members of the Class of 1925, belong to one or the other of these classes of Christian pedagogues.

And Achieve a Multiplied Benediction "Through the Knowledge of God." And, finally, in every one of you, my young friends, may the Apostle's loving and confident benediction be fully realized: "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the *knowledge* of God and our Savior Jesus Christ; according as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the *knowledge* of him that hath called us to glory and virtue." Amen.